

## A LETTER FROM THE COMMANDER



As summer in the nation's capital comes to an end, we here at Hangar 2 also mark the final months of four celebrated members of "America's Band." Chief Master Sergeant Robin Forrester-Meadows, Senior Master Sergeant Edward McKee, Master Sergeant Larry Ink and Master Sergeant Wade Beach have announced their intention to retire and will be finishing up tremendous careers in service to their country in the next few weeks. Each of these fine Air

Force professionals has been a major contributor to the prestige and success of The USAF Band.

It is almost impossible for me to attempt to thank these outstanding individuals for all that they have done and accomplished. Through countless concerts and protocol performances, the name of pianist Master Sergeant Wade Beach has become synonymous with the very best in jazz music today. His last six years as piano soloist with The Airmen of Note has produced a magnitude of recordings and concert memories that are nothing short of legendary.

In over 20 years of performances as flute soloist and later as principal flutist with The Concert Band, Master Sergeant Lawrence Ink has established a benchmark in flute virtuosity that may never be equaled in the entire Department of Defense music career field. His dazzling performances with The Concert Band and The Woodwind Quintet will never be forgotten by anyone privileged enough to have heard them.

Senior Master Sergeant Edward McKee is the quintessential Renaissance man for The USAF Band. His extraordi-

nary talents as tuba virtuoso have been critical to the worldwide success and recognition of The Concert Band. He was not only the solo tubist with The Dixieland Band, but also the driving creative force behind this ever-popular group. In his many performances with The USAF Brass Quintet, he helped delight audiences throughout the nation. Last, but not least, his creative talents as chief of programs and graphic design have resulted in thousands of programs, posters, recruitment advertisements and other publications that have not only brought great credit upon this organization, but upon the entire United States Air Force as well.

Chief Master Sergeant Robin Forrester-Meadows has been a tireless worker, loyal advocate and trusted advisor to not just me as commander, but to every man and woman of this organization. Her care and concern for the welfare and achievement of her colleagues has always been matched equally by her determination and skill in working to ensure the success of this unit as a performing musical entity. For so many years, as director of supply and later as resource manager and oboist/assistant manager of The Concert Band, Chief Forrester-Meadows has been a source of inspiration to all of us in her steadfast work and achievements. The epitome of the Air Force professional and the consummate musician/manager, she will be well and truly missed.

A commander must always face such conflicting emotions when saying goodbye to such outstanding troops. The privilege of recognizing a career well done is equally offset by the necessity of saying goodbye to a trusted colleague and associate. It is with a mixture of pride, honor, and not just a little sadness that, on behalf of every member of America's Band, I bid them all farewell and good journey as they embark on the next successful chapter of their lives.

Lowell E. Graham, Colonel, USAF  
Commander and Conductor

## Silver Wings

Silver Wings would like to welcome its newest member, TSgt Matthew Ascione, guitar player extraordinaire! He entered the Air Force in October 1995 as an airman first class, and was stationed at Travis Air Force Base in California, where he played with the USAF Band of the Golden Gate. His next duty assignment was Hickam Air Force Base in Hawaii, and he is currently en route to Washington, D.C. Sergeant Ascione is a very talented musician who can do many things, from singing to writing songs, to playing many different styles of music. We are looking forward to performing with such a gifted individual.

As the summer winds down, we remember some of the wonderful concerts of the season, from the Capitol Steps to the Veterans Memorial Park in Wheaton, Maryland. We were also privileged to perform at Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force Eric W. Benken's retirement, and at the 11<sup>th</sup> Operations Group farewell picnic for 11<sup>th</sup> Operations Group Commander Colonel Thomas M. Hall and his family. We look forward to playing at the Air Force Birthday Ball on September 24 and at the Old Fashioned Apple Festival in Burlington, West Virginia on October 2. See ya'll there.

—TSgt Marie Mindnich